NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

FOREST SLASH TREATMENT

(Ac.)

CODE 384

DEFINITION

Treating woody plant residues created during forestry, agroforestry and horticultural activities to achieve management objectives.

PURPOSE

- Reduce hazardous fuels and the risk of unintended wildfires
- Reduce the risk of harmful insects and disease
- Protect/maintain air quality by reducing the risk of wildfire
- Improve access to forage for grazing and browsing animals
- Enhance aesthetics
- Reduce the risk of harm to humans and livestock
- Improve the soil organic matter and maintain or enhance soil health and soil quality
- Improve the site for natural or artificial regeneration of forest tree species

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice applies on areas with quantities of woody slash and debris requiring treatment.

CRITERIA

General Criteria Applicable to All Purposes

Slash treatment and the condition and extent of residual slash shall be planned and the method selected based on purpose(s).

Slash treatment methods (i.e., burning, chipping, lop and scatter, removal, crushing) will achieve landowner objectives while adequately protecting land and water resources.

Care shall be taken to minimize injury to or function of the residual plant communities.

Timing of treatment shall coincide with intended purpose(s) and minimize impact on other resources.

Burning activities shall comply with the NRCS standard Prescribed Burning (338).

Slash and debris left on the site after treatment will not present an unacceptable fire, safety, environmental or pest hazard. Such remaining material will not interfere with the intended purpose or other management activities.

Comply with Idaho Statute “Title 38: Forestry Forest Products and Stumpage Districts, Chapter 13, ‘Forest Practices Act’” requirements. Consult with the local Idaho Department of Lands office for permits and guidance.

Comply with guidelines found within the Fuel Break standard (383).

Additional Criteria Applicable to Reduce Hazardous Fuels

Reduce the amount of fuels to an acceptable level by controlling height, size, amount and distribution.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harmful Insects and Disease

Degree, intensity and timing of treatment shall take full advantage of harmful insect or disease characteristics to enhance the effectiveness of control.

Comply with guidelines found within the Pest Management standard (595).

Additional Criteria to Protect/Maintain Air Quality by Reducing the Risk of Wildfire

Activities will be consistent with established regulations and guidelines for PM10 and PM 2.5 emissions, ozone precursors (NOx and VOCs), as well as smoke and fugitive dust, and state and local permit requirements.

When feasible, use chipping, shredding, bio-fuel composting or other techniques in lieu of burning.

Additional Criteria to Improve Access to Forage for Grazing and Browsing Animals and wildlife

Slash shall be piled or removed sufficiently to allow access to forage by livestock and to maximize forage growth.

Additional Criteria to Enhance Aesthetics

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for aesthetics and visual resources.

Additional Criteria to Reduce the Risk of Harm to Humans and Livestock

Slash that is scattered or piled and left on the site will be further treated to meet client objectives and any state or local requirements for safe use of the area.

Additional Criteria to Improve Soil Organic Matter and Soil Quality/Health

Slash will be of a size and closeness to soil to accelerate decomposition.

Slash treatment methods will address the effect of treatment on soil nutrient status, and any other potential adversely impacted soil property.

Additional Criteria to Improve the Site for Natural or Artificial Regeneration

Slash will be treated to complement treatments specified in the Tree/Shrub Site Preparation standard (490).

CONSIDERATIONS

When determining method and timing of slash treatment, consider air quality regulations, burning requirements, available resources, ability to use woody biomass and regeneration needs.

Consider wildlife needs when performing and timing treatment.

Consider the beneficial and other effects on cultural resources, threatened and endangered species, natural areas and wetlands.

PLANS AND SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for applying this practice shall be prepared for each site and recorded using approved specification sheets, job sheets, technical notes and narrative statements in the conservation plan or other acceptable documentation.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Monitor populations and the potential of damage to site resources by harmful pests and take controlling actions as necessary. Comply with guidelines found within the Pest Management standard (595).

Access by vehicles or people will be controlled during treatment for safety. Comply with guidelines found within the Use Exclusion standard (472).